

Teaching the English Newspaper Effectively

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This is an excerpt from "Culture and Communication" (1995) Kyoto: Yamaguchi Shooten.
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Many Japanese students would like to read English newspapers, but they find it too difficult, in part because they do not know enough about the conventions of newspapers and newspaper articles. Since the early 1980s, I have been teaching students how to read newspapers. As a result of the lessons students became interested in reading newspapers and could learn to read them independently using a dictionary.

For this series of lessons, I developed materials to introduce English newspapers and exercises to help students understand newspapers (Kitao & Kitao, 1989; Kitao & Kitao, 1991; Kitao & Kitao, 1992). The following is a list of basic areas I cover in these lessons and [a review test](#) that I devised to help students identify the concepts they had been learning.

1. Importance of Reading English Newspapers
2. English Newspapers Available in Japan
3. Organization of English Newspapers
 - news stories
 - feature stories
 - business section
 - news stories
 - feature stories
 - the stock market report
 - exchange rates for foreign currency
 - sports section
 - news stories
 - feature stories
 - columns
 - editorials
 - letters to the editor
 - reviews
 - schedules
 - cultural events
 - other
 - comics
 - classified advertisements
 - weather reports
4. Headlines
 - one- or two-sentence summaries of the article
 - deletion of short words (articles, "be" verbs, etc.)
 - verb tenses (different from ordinary use)
 - abbreviations
 - short words instead of common longer words
5. Organization of News Stories
 - bylines, credit lines, and datelines
 - arrangement of news articles (inverted pyramid)
 - leads

6. Grammar of Newspaper Articles
 - o shorter sentences
 - o omitting relative clauses
 - o using more noun phrases
 - o avoiding using "of" forms and prepositional phrases
7. Specifying the Source of Information
8. Objective; Avoiding Writer's Opinions

The following is the review exercises which students do using any copy of an English newspaper, which is included in the teacher's manual of our textbooks.

REVIEW EXERCISES

Year_____Dept._____Number_____ Name_____

Use a copy of an English newspaper and answer the following questions. If the question is not applicable (for example, if the type of article asked about in the question does not appear on that day). write "NA."

1. How many pages are there?
2. How many pages are taken up by news, business, sports, TV and radio schedules, and feature stories?
3. What is on each page?
 1. -
 2. -
 3. -
 4. -
 5. -
 6. -
 7. -
 8. -
 9. -
 10. -
 11. -
 12. -
4. What is the most important news story? Where is it? How many columns does it take? What percentage of the page does it take up? Does it have a photo?
5. What is the second most important news story? Where is it? How many columns does it take? What percentage of the page does it take up? Does it have a photo?
6. How many news articles are there on the front page? How many of them are domestic news? international news?
7. Classify the news articles on the front page according to dateline, credit line. and whether they have a byline.
 - dateline
 - credit line
 - with byline / without byline
8. Where is the index? What page do you find news articles on? business news? radio and TV schedules? sports news?
9. Where do you find editorials? columns? feature stories? information about the stock market?

10. Is the editorial reprinted from another newspaper? If so, from what newspaper? When was it originally published?
11. On what page do you find reviews? What is being reviewed? Is the reviewer Japanese or non-Japanese?
12. On what page do you find TV and radio schedules? What else do you see on that page?
13. On what page(s) do you find comics? How many are there?
14. On what page(s) do you find classified ads? How many are there? What are they about?
15. On what page(s) do you find letters to the editor? How many are there? Were they written by Japanese or non-Japanese people? If any of the letters were written by non-Japanese people, can you tell what country the writer came from?
16. On what page(s) do you find reprints of articles? How many are there? What are they about? What publications are they from?
17. Where do you find international news articles? domestic news articles? How many of each are there?
18. What are the three largest headlines, in order of size?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
19. Look for examples of headlines with the following characteristics, and fill in the chart with the page number, the headline, and the headline rewritten as a regular sentence.
 - a. "and" omitted and replaced with a comma
 - b. a "be" verb omitted
 - c. a pronoun omitted
 - d. an article omitted
 - e. a simple present tense verb that refers to a past event
 - f. an -ing form of the verb
 - g. "to" and a verb
 - h. a past participle used for the passive voice
 - i. three headlines with abbreviations for names of countries or regions
 - j. an abbreviation with an apostrophe
 - k. an abbreviation with a period
 - l. the name of a capital city used to refer to the government of that country
 - m. three other abbreviations
 - n. three short words often used in headlines

Page

Headline

Regular Sentence

a.

- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.
- j.
- k.
- l.
- m.
- n.

20. Find three wire services, besides American and Japanese ones. What are they?

- a.
- b.
- c.

21. Find three articles with bylines. Who wrote the articles?

- | | headline | author |
|----|----------|--------|
| a. | | |
| b. | | |
| c. | | |

22. Find three articles with datelines outside of Japan and the US. Where did the articles come from? What were the dates?

- | | headline | place | date |
|----|----------|-------|------|
| a. | | | |
| b. | | | |
| c. | | | |

23. Find leads with the following information:

- a. what, who, where, and when
- b. what, who, where, and why
- c. what, who, where, and how

24. Find one sentence where a relative pronoun is avoided by putting the noun phrase before the noun it modifies.

25. Find a sentence where a noun or noun phrase has been substituted for the name of a person or organization, in order to give more information about that person or organization.
- -
26. Find two examples of sentences where "of" is avoided.
- -
27. Find a direct and an indirect quote.
- -
28. How many feature stories are there? Choose five feature articles, and fill out the following chart.

Headline	Topic	Author(s)
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		
e.		

29. How many sports news or sports feature stories are there? Choose four sports stories and fill out the following chart.

Headline international?	News or Sport	Japanese or feature?
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		

30. Where can you find an editorial? What is the topic? Is the topic of local, national, or international interest? What is the editor's position on that issue?

31. Fill out the chart below with information about the columns that appear in the paper.

Page Author	Column	Headline	Topic
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			

32. List the articles on the business page. How many of these are international?
 33. What is the selling price of the yen against the dollar?
 34. What was the Dow Jones average?
 35. How many classified ads do you find? What are they?
 36. Are there any foreign movies or other foreign programs on TV in the Kansai area? What are they? What channel are they on?
 37. What subject is the advice column about? Is the person giving advice Japanese or non-Japanese? What is the advice given?
 38. What topics do you find digests for (news, business, etc.)? How many individual stories are there in each digest?
 39. What else do you find in this newspaper?
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List of References

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Source:

Kitao, K., Kitao, S. K., Headrick Miller, J. Carpenter, J. W., & Rinner C. (Eds.). (1995). "Culture and communication". Kyoto: Yamaguchi Shoten. pp. 291-298. ISBN 4-8411-0787-8 C3082

The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. II, No. 3, March 1996

<http://iteslj.org/>
